(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government of Himachal Pradesh has sought additional relief from Union Government for farmers and fruit growers;

(d) if so, the response of Union Government thereto;

(e) whether Government has agreed to extend additional assistance to the State Government; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the time by when this additional relief is likely to be given to Government of Himachal Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government of Himachal Pradesh has informed that deficient rains has caused severe losses to the crops of maize, apple, off-season vegetables and other agricultural products in the State amounting to about Rs. 872.36 crore.

(c) to (f) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments concerned to take necessary measures in the wake of natural calamities including drought. The Government of India supplements the efforts of the State with financial and logistic support. The State Governments have ready availability of funds under Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for taking necessary measures. For additional assistance from National Calamity contingency Fund (NCCF) for natural calamities of severe nature, the State Governments are required to submit a Memorandum. No Memorandum for assistance from the NCCF to deal with the situation arising out of deficit rainfall in the state during South-West Monsoon, 2009 has so far been received from the Government of Himachal Pradesh. The existing norms of expenditure for assistance from CRF/NCCF, *inter-alia*, include assistance towards input subsidy for crop loss of 50% and above.

Famine in the country

†3057. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the name of the States where famine situation prevails due to lack of rain;

(b) the amount of financial aid being allocated by Government to famine affected States to help them in tackling the famine situation; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) No report on famine situation has been received from any State so far due to deficient rainfall during South-West Monsoon 2009.

Krishi Vigyan Kendras in Assam

3058. SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) how many Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) are there in Assam;

(b) the details of role of these Kendras to boost production of rice and other agricultural products to meet the growing demand in their respective areas; and

(c) whether it is a fact that the K.V.K. meant for the district of Barpeta established in the district of Baksa in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Twenty KVKs are functioning at present in Assam State.

(b) KVKs in Assam State are involved in conducting on-farm trials for technology assessment, and refinement for field application of technologies, demonstrations of proven technologies for their popularization and training the farmers, rural youths and extension personnel towards adoption of the recommended technologies in their field.

(c) No, Sir.

Decline in sowing of paddy

3059. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sowing of paddy, a major foodgrain, has gone down;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to improve the situation in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The coverage under area of rice has declined so far during Kharif 2009 season due to drought like situation prevailing at present. Less coverage of rice has been reported mainly in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and West Bengal.

The Ministry of Agriculture is constantly reviewing the sowing progress with the State Governments through weekly video-conferences/meetings, particularly in the wake of weak monsoon so far to coordinate adequate response. For different scenarios, contingency crop-plans for specific-agro climatic conditions have been prepared. General features of these plans include replacement of main crop such as rice with alternate crop like millets in case of delayed sowing; planning of early maturing varieties of the main crop; planning for protective irrigation by efficiency use of available water, promoting technical package of practices like direct sowing, less plant spacing, more seed rate etc. Truthfully labeled seeds are allowed to be distributed under various schemes in the affected areas. Age norms are relaxed for the seed varieties distributed under Government Schemes. In case of delayed planting, additional doses of nutrients are recommended for crops in good rainfall areas which to some extent compensate the reduction of production in rain-deficient States/areas.